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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

**EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF DR. MERCEDES SANTOS
COULOMBE**

Introduced By: Representatives Abney, Martin, and DeSimone

Date Introduced: April 30, 2014

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with sadness and regret that this House has learned of the passing of Dr.
2 Mercedes Santos Coulombe on April 19, 2014; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. Coulombe was a lifelong resident of Newport, Rhode Island. She was
4 born in 1933, the youngest child of Joseph and Mercedes Santos. She graduated from St.
5 Catherine Academy in Newport in 1951, and thereafter matriculated at the College of Our Lady
6 of the Elms in Massachusetts, where she graduated Cum Laude. It was at this time that she
7 discovered her passion for teaching and education and shortly thereafter, began her distinguished
8 professional career as an elementary school teacher in Agawam, Massachusetts. It was also at this
9 time that she met and married the love of her life, Robert R. Coulombe, Sr. Together they
10 returned to Newport and had three children, Mercedes C. Mellekas, Robert R. Coulombe, Jr., and
11 Dr. Triste M. Coulombe; and

12 WHEREAS, Upon her return to Newport, Dr. Coulombe began her lifelong employment
13 with the Newport School Department. Being a devoted and exemplary teacher, she quickly rose
14 through the ranks. She became a Principal at Coggeshall Elementary School and was highly
15 regarded and praised for the diligence, dedication and innovative ideas she brought with her to
16 work every day in her duties as Principal; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1989, she obtained a Doctorate of Education degree from Nova
18 University. In her position as Head of Curriculum, she was instrumental in the development and
19 implementation of the Gifted Child Program for elementary students in Newport. In 1998, the

1 Newport School Board selected Dr. Coulombe to be the first female Superintendent of the
2 Newport School Department, a position she held for four years until her retirement in 2001.
3 Mercedes, even in retirement, never stopped giving back to the city and community she loved so
4 much. Shortly after retiring, she established the Mercedes S. Coulombe Scholarship, which is
5 awarded annually to students who have demonstrated outstanding leadership skills; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Mercedes Coulombe was a lifelong member of Jesus Savior Church,
7 serving her parish as a Sunday school teacher and as a member of the Parish Council. She was
8 also a long time member of the Portuguese-American Federation and served as its secretary. Dr.
9 Coulombe was a long-time supporter of Newport Hospital, giving generously of her time and
10 resources. She also supported numerous other charities in Newport County and served on the
11 Board of the Bank of Newport. In her free time, she enjoyed travelling the world with her family
12 and friends, reading, and the recreational activities of boating and skiing; and

13 WHEREAS, Mercedes Santos Coulombe is survived by her husband Robert, their three
14 children, Mercedes, Bob and Triste, and grandchildren Jaime, Nicolas, Missy, Daniel, Kylie,
15 Ciara and Megan; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
17 Providence Plantations hereby expresses its deepest condolences to the Coulombe Family on the
18 passing of Mercedes Santos Coulombe; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
20 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Robert R. Coulombe, Sr.

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